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Summary record of the 30th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 20 October 2000, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Gittens-Joseph ..... (Trinidad & Tobago)

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* Items which the Committee had decided to consider together.

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00-70100 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 110: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/C.3/55/L.17)

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.17: The girl child

1. **Ms. de Wet** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, introduced the draft resolution and informed the Committee that the delegations of Afghanistan, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Dominican Republic, the Gambia, Iceland, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Liberia, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam wished to join the sponsors.

Agenda item 107: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/C.3/55/L.14)

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.14: Improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system

2. **The Chairperson** informed the Committee that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

3. **Ms. Wilcox** (Canada), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, introduced the draft resolution and informed the Committee that the delegations of Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, the Congo, Croatia, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Micronesia, Monaco, Morocco, Namibia, the Niger, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, the Sudan, Swaziland, Turkey, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America and Venezuela wished to join the sponsors.

4. She had a number of revisions to make to the text. At the beginning of the fourth preambular paragraph, the word "Welcoming" should be replaced by "Taking note of the"; the sixth preambular paragraph should be deleted; in the tenth preambular paragraph, the words "at the P-5 level" should be replaced by the words "at some levels of the Secretariat", the words "to the P-4 level" should be replaced by the words "to one particular level", the word "also" should be inserted before the words "at the slow incremental pace" and a footnote should be added, reading "See the report of the Secretary-General: Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/55/339), para. 4".

5. Paragraph 1 (a) should be renumbered paragraph 1, and, at the beginning of the paragraph, the word "Welcomes" should be replaced by the words "Takes note with appreciation"; in paragraph 2, the words "at the D-1 level and above" should be replaced by the words "especially at senior and policy-making levels"; former paragraphs 1 (b) to (g) should be renumbered as paragraphs 3 (a) to (f) and former paragraph 3 should be renumbered paragraph 4; former paragraph 4 should be renumbered paragraph 5 and, within that paragraph, the words "the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development" should be deleted, the word "them" should be deleted and replaced by the words "the Secretary-General", the word "their" should be replaced by the word "his", the words "within all departments and offices of the Secretariat" should be inserted following the words "gender balance" and a new footnote should be added at the end of the paragraph, reading "As identified in para. 15 of the report of the Secretary-General: Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/55/339)". Paragraph 5 should be renumbered 6 and, in the introduction to the paragraph, the word "to" should be replaced by "in order inter alia to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender distribution with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations"; in the new paragraph 6 (a), the words "Develop innovative recruitment strategies" should be replaced by the word "To"; in the new paragraph 6 (b) the words "and the further development of mechanisms to effectively encourage, monitor and assess the performance of programme managers in meeting targets for improving women's representation" should be replaced by "and the further development of monitoring and assessment mechanisms to meet targets for improving women's representation". Former paragraphs 6 and 7 should be renumbered paragraphs 7 and 8, respectively. Former paragraph 8 should be renumbered paragraph 9; and in the new paragraph 9 (a), the words "the D-1 level and above" should be replaced by "senior and policy-

making levels". Lastly, the former paragraph 9 should be deleted.

6. **The Chairperson** said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.14, as orally revised, without a vote.

7. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 112: Elimination of racism and racial discrimination (*continued*) (A/55/18 and Add.1, A/55/203, 266, 285, 304, 307 and 459; A/C.3/55/L.20)

Agenda item 113: Right of peoples to self-determination (*continued*) (A/55/176 and Add.1, and A/55/334)

8. **Mr. Al-Shaheen** (Kuwait) said that Kuwait greatly appreciated the endeavours of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and considered that implementation of the recommendations in his report (A/55/304) was of the greatest importance. It also appreciated the report of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (A/55/307).

9. Kuwait's position on the elimination of racism and racial discrimination was informed by the values of Kuwaiti society and the principles of Islam, which rejected all forms of racial discrimination as grave violations of human rights.

10. Kuwait had made great strides with regard to human rights in general and in combating all forms of racial discrimination. At the national level, it had taken many legal and practical measures with a view to making anti-discrimination activities more effective. At the international level, it had increased cooperation in the field of human rights and become a party to the main human rights instruments. Under the Constitution, such instruments took on the force of law.

11. Convinced of the relationship between improved human rights and enhanced economic and social conditions, Kuwait always highlighted that relationship in its foreign policy. It steadfastly promoted the activities of non-governmental organizations which offered economic and social assistance to other countries, and granted a great deal of development assistance to developing countries.

12. **Mr. Ateaga** (Chile) observed that despite the efforts of the international community, racial discrimination, ethnic conflicts and generalized violence in various regions of the world had often resulted in ethnic cleansing. Racial minorities, migrants, asylum-seekers and indigenous peoples had all fallen victim to intolerance, and millions of human beings continued to be discriminated against simply because of the colour of their skin or ethnic origin. He therefore welcomed the General Assembly's decision to convene a World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance as an expression of the international community's concern at the rising number of racist incidents and of its recognition of the challenges involved in combating racism in an increasingly globalized world. He promised his delegation's full support to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as the Secretary-General of the Conference. The opportunity to host the regional preparatory conference from 5 to 7 December 2000 was especially significant for Chile: it highlighted the relationship between its foreign policy and its relationship with civil society, stressing the individual as well as concern for human rights on both the national and international levels.

13. The end of the cold war had brought with it such phenomena as globalization, which fundamentally affected relations among States and among members of society. The accompanying revolution in communications and the combination of information technology, the Internet and electronic commerce had the potential to bring about change as profound as the industrial revolution. It should promote better, more direct relations between people, without regard to distance, culture or economic status. The challenge was to take full advantage of the opportunities offered while at the same time working to counter negative effects such as racism and xenophobia.

14. The regional preparatory conference would provide an ideal opportunity to help make the fight against racism a priority for the international community. Prior to the conference, a citizens' forum involving mainly non-governmental organizations would be held, organized by Chilean non-governmental organizations. His Government welcomed that meeting, in keeping with its policy of close collaboration with organizations of civil society. The forum would promote the widest possible participation and exchange

of information between civil society and the regional conference.

15. The World Conference against Racism would be the first major United Nations conference of the century. Its theme had been a priority for the Organization since its beginnings, and he stressed the need for renewed vigour in combating intolerance and discrimination and expressed the hope that the regional conference would define clear measures and reasonable compromises which would help the region eliminate intolerance and discrimination.

16. **Mr. Chakraborti** (India) said it was misconception to think that since racism was no longer a State ideology it was a marginal problem. Globalization had exacerbated racism, with which the international community must grapple. Although imperialism and colonialism had died, attitudes ingrained over the course of generations persisted, and must be confronted.

17. As a result of globalization, populations until recently homogeneous had been forced to come to terms with the different races and cultures of new immigrants. Some had accepted the challenge of becoming multicultural, multi-ethnic States; others had found it difficult not to define their nationality in terms of race. The immigration policies of most developed countries were designed to keep out, or to regulate the entry of, peoples of different racial or cultural backgrounds. Most visas were allotted for menial jobs, confirming the attitude that such races were inferior. At the same time, migrant workers sparked resentment on the part of native workers.

18. Those were systemic flaws that could only be redressed by sustained attention from the Government and society. And yet, if attention was paid only to extreme manifestations of prejudice, racial discrimination would never disappear. Much attention, for instance, was paid to manifestations of racial hatred on the Internet, while the open racial prejudice of the mainstream international media was ignored. The third world was given international news coverage only in the event of catastrophes, supporting the idea that their populations were incompetent, corrupt or violent, reinforcing prejudices and insidiously affecting the formulation of policies. Those issues must be looked at squarely by the World Conference.

19. As to the right of peoples to self-determination, established in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), that right had been distorted for political ends. In 1986, the International Court of Justice had ruled that the primary aim of self-determination was to secure respect for the territorial boundaries of countries. Self-determination clearly fell within the scope of colonization, and was bound by the concepts of territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-interference. In the same vein, the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had reaffirmed the idea that self-determination should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would impair the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States, and had underscored the interdependent, mutually reinforcing nature of democracy, development and respect for human rights. In independent States, self-determination was best maintained by the exercise of democratic choice. Dignity, freedom, justice, tolerance and plurality were based on the full and equal participation in governance of each citizen in any open democracy.

20. **Mrs. Viotti** (Brazil) said that her country was proud of its varied ethnic identity, and conscious of its tradition of harmonious coexistence among races, cultures and religions. It had embraced the convening of the World Conference against Racism, and had actively participated in its preparations. The Government was aware of the significance of holding that important meeting in South Africa, a country exemplary in its struggle against institutionalized discrimination, and in Africa, the continent that had suffered most from colonialism.

21. The Government of Brazil wished to acknowledge the important work of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, who had stressed that the Internet was the preferred medium for incitement to racial hatred and for the dissemination of racist and xenophobic ideas. In preparation for the Conference, strategies must be designed to eradicate those phenomena. While the spread of democracy stood to promote equality and justice, its misuse for the undemocratic purpose of disseminating racism was a serious cause for concern. During the latest session of the Commission on Human Rights, Brazil had co-sponsored a consensus resolution on the incompatibility between democracy and racism.

22. The Government of Brazil was endeavouring better to focus its campaign against racism, and to seek solutions in a transparent and participatory manner. It was committed to an open discussion in that regard

with the Brazilian Congress, the media, and non-governmental organizations. The internal consultative process of preparing for the World Conference had begun; the aim was to include a wide spectrum of social movements, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and experts. A national committee had recently been established, with equal representation of governmental and non-governmental bodies, with a view to achieving a balanced analysis of the agenda. Her Government also intended to take an active part in the regional preparatory meetings to be held in Santiago.

23. Brazil being fully committed to the eradication of all forms of racism and racial discrimination throughout the world, commended the important initiatives undertaken by the United Nations in that field and hoped that the World Conference would pave the way for a new century free of racism and xenophobia.

24. **Mr. Tekin** (Turkey) expressed concern that discrimination and intolerance, in their most subtle and contemporary forms, were on the rise and posed a serious threat to social peace and harmony in many multicultural societies. He noted the upsurge in racist violence, stemming mainly from the activities of far-right organizations, and the increasing use of the Internet to promote xenophobia. The 3 million Turkish citizens living outside Turkey had bitter experiences of how easily foreigners could become targets of xenophobic attacks.

25. His delegation attached great importance to the development of an effective international strategy to combat racism and fully supported the holding of the World Conference in South Africa, a country whose people had suffered greatly under the apartheid regime. His Government was participating actively in the preparations and he hoped that the Conference would propose effective strategies and mechanisms to eradicate racism.

26. Merely enacting laws against intolerance and discrimination did not automatically eliminate racism; effective legal protection must be provided and States must impose penalties to deter racially motivated offences as well as make every effort to promote tolerance and increase awareness of the dangers of intolerance. Governments must also streamline their immigration and asylum policies with a view to promoting greater acceptance of multiculturalism. Such efforts, combined with international initiatives such as the World Conference, would help build a racism-free future where peace, diversity, equality, tolerance and mutual respect prevailed.

27. **Mrs. Monroy** (Mexico) said that, despite the constant efforts of the international community, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continued to prevail in various parts of the world. The racial hatred that led to ethnic-cleansing campaigns and other forms of discrimination against minorities, indigenous populations and migrant workers must be eradicated. It was particularly alarming that the Internet was being used to encourage hatred and promote intolerance and xenophobia among young people.

28. Her Government hoped that the World Conference would set specific objectives to be achieved at the national, regional and international levels. It welcomed the agreement on the five themes to be included in the provisional agenda for the Conference, particularly those concerning the victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and international cooperation to combat those phenomena.

29. The World Conference must analyse the situation of vulnerable groups, particularly indigenous peoples and migrants, and, taking into account indigenous traditions and customs, must strengthen action to guarantee access to justice. It should also consider the issue of the human rights of migrants, who were being subjected to acts of xenophobia, in various parts of the world, without regard for their contribution to the society and economy of the host country. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families must enter into force as soon as possible, and there was an urgent need to strengthen international cooperation on trafficking in migrants.

30. The World Conference should make specific recommendations about the double discrimination still suffered by women, and should bear in mind other groups which also needed special attention, such as children, the disabled, the elderly, and persons suffering from HIV/AIDS.

31. **Mrs. Romulus** (Haiti) said that her delegation subscribed to the statements made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Caribbean Community and by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of

77 and China. Her Government shared the concerns of the international community about the eradication of racism and related intolerance. Since its founding in 1804, Haiti had instituted a tradition of racial tolerance, and that principle had been enshrined in the first Constitution. Although the 1987 Constitution did not explicitly refer to racial discrimination, it did refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the first Constitution. Moreover, Haiti had a tolerant attitude towards foreigners of all races.

32. Haiti had always fought for racial equality and had participated in the struggles of enslaved peoples for freedom from racial discrimination. Yet Haitians searching for a better life in neighbouring countries were suffering all kinds of humiliations, and their situation was ignored by everyone, and above all by the media.

33. The report by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights (A/55/304) provided a fairly full picture, particularly of contemporary forms of racial discrimination. That complex phenomenon must be carefully analysed. Adults must maintain constant vigilance so as to avoid transmitting to children attitudes of contempt for other human beings.

34. **Mr. Salman** (Iraq) said that the right to self-determination was the most basic of human rights: without it, no other human rights could be enjoyed, by either the individual or society. Since 1991, the United States of America and the United Kingdom had made sustained efforts to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq with a view to destabilizing it and threatening its territorial integrity. In order to further their aims, which were completely incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, the two Governments had unilaterally imposed no-fly zones on northern and southern Iraq, and used military force to maintain them. They had heavily bombarded Iraq, killing or wounding large numbers of civilians and causing substantial damage to civilian installations. The United States and the United Kingdom bore full international responsibility for their illegal operations, in which the Kuwaiti and Saudi regimes colluded by providing support and facilities.

35. Clearly, the main aim was to overthrow the Government of Iraq and replace it with a client regime that would further their regional interests. The United States Administration made no secret of its shameless interference in Iraq's internal affairs, in blatant violation of the right to self-determination and the equality of States. That aggression violated the right of the Iraqi people to choose their political and economic systems and threatened their legitimate Government. The measures taken by Iraq to counter that hostile policy were in accordance with the Charter and international law, and deserved support. Furthermore, Iraq affirmed its right to seek compensation for the material damage and psychological harm it had sustained as a result of those hostile attacks.

36. **Mr. Tekle** (Eritrea) said that the post-cold-war period was characterized by two contradictory trends in race relations. While efforts were being stepped up to eliminate all forms of racism, those phenomena were re-emerging in more sophisticated and subtle ways. One of the most serious forms of racism — which was on the increase in many parts of the world, including the Horn of Africa — was ethnic exclusivity.

37. In Ethiopia, an ethno-apartheid system had been inaugurated by the minority regime under the guise of ethnic federalism and was being savagely used to victimize the other ethnic groups in the country and to promote the exclusive interests of one ethnic group, the Tigreans. The victimized ethnic groups were regarded as adversaries and a threat to the prosperity and identity of the ruling group.

38. Although the Constitution provided for the equality of all citizens and ethnic groups in Ethiopia, special measures were constantly being taken by the minority regime to promote the advancement of the Tigrean ethnic group at the expense of other groups. At the same time, the regime was forcibly annexing large swathes of territory belonging to other ethnic groups, thereby ensuring hegemonic control by the State and an exploitative relationship with other regions.

39. While the Ethiopian Government was purportedly run by a coalition, the Tigray People's Liberation Front had hegemonic control of the country. It controlled ethnic administrative regions through Tigrean cadres who dictated policy and ensured its implementation. Non-Tigreans were not welcome in Tigray, while Tigreans were able to work wherever in Ethiopia they wished.

40. Xenophobia permeated Ethiopian politics. Identity politics as preached and practised by the minority regime in Ethiopia had created hostility between Tigreans and other ethnic groups or peoples of

neighbouring States and given rise to escalating conflict within Ethiopia and outside its borders.

41. Ethiopia's policy of ethnic domination and exploitation had become a threat to national, regional and international peace. It was encouraging that the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations were adopting a more proactive and preventive approach. The policy of the minority regime of Ethiopia must be condemned. It could no longer be argued that doctrines of ethnic or racial domination were practised by white people only, and that only white people must be held accountable.

42. **Mrs. Al-Hajaji** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), commenting on item 113, said that, since the end of the cold war, it had been claimed that "humanitarian intervention" was a means of settling disputes, ending strife and protecting vulnerable minorities. However, operations carried out in the 1990s, especially the late 1990s, had made it clear that the world's super-Power was attempting to further its own interests and extend its influence and that it cared nothing for human rights or minorities: intervention had been selective and not governed by any rules. Globalization made the super-Power's agenda even clearer: barriers of all kinds had been broken down in order to facilitate the extension of its hegemony.

43. Intervention on the pretext of protecting human rights and vulnerable minorities was a blatant violation of international law. An attempt was made to confer legitimacy on such intervention and make it internationally acceptable by involving the United Nations, but the fact remained that it was carried out selectively.

44. The calls made during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly claiming the "right to humanitarian intervention" when States perpetrated human rights violations annulled, in effect, the sole criterion for membership in the United Nations, namely, national sovereignty and independence. So-called humanitarian intervention constituted a violation and an arbitrary interpretation of the Charter that would undermine the United Nations and jeopardize relations between States, as well as threaten the security of peoples and their right to self-determination. Recent intervention, whether political or military, had restricted national sovereignty and amounted to intervention in the internal affairs of States. Her delegation categorically rejected such intervention.

45. **Mr. Singh** (Executive Coordinator, World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance) said that he welcomed the support expressed for the World Conference and the growing awareness and understanding of the issues and themes. There were four tasks to be carried out over the coming months: to build greater public awareness of the objectives of the Conference, for which the support of Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society was needed; to compile and publicize best practices; to consider the problems which still remained, with a view to finding solutions; and to promote the Conference as the focal point of a process that would continue towards the goal of building a multiracial, multicultural and multi-ethnic society.

46. **Mr. Glèlè-Ahanhanzo** (Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance) said that the Committee's deliberations showed an awareness that the phenomenon of racism was not limited to particular peoples or groups, but was a worldwide problem, and that racism took very subtle forms in daily life. He was gratified that the international community had mobilized in favour of holding a World Conference. He called on Governments and non-governmental organizations to continue their reflections and, without making accusations or stigmatizing countries, but by engaging in dialogue, to go forward to eradicate racism in all its forms.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

47. **Ms. Bharghouti** (Observer for Palestine) said that the Israeli representative had falsely stated, at the preceding meeting, that 99 per cent of Palestinians lived under the rule of the Palestinian Authority. The international community had noted that Israeli helicopter gunships had fired missiles at Palestinian towns and Israeli tanks had rolled into Palestinian areas; it had seen the Israeli occupying force using indiscriminate and excessive force against Palestinian civilians. Clearly, the whole of the Palestinian Territory was under Israeli occupation.

48. The Israeli representative had stated that those Palestinians who chose to send their children out to participate in acts of violence and aggression bore full responsibility for the results of that criminal abuse of children — a racist and insensitive remark. As the

scholar Dr. Hanan Ashrawi had pointed out, blaming the victim was a common means by which the guilty party rationalized and distorted the horror of its crime, whether the victim was a battered wife, an abused child or a Palestinian subjected to the brutality of the Israeli occupation.

49. The father of the 12-year-old boy Mohammed al-Durra had not wanted his son to join the long list of Palestinians killed by the Israeli army: he had begged them to spare the life of his son, who had been shot and killed as the world watched. That incident contradicted the words of the Israeli representative, and revealed that the Israeli army had no regard for the lives of Palestinians, especially Palestinian children.

50. **Ms. Ali** (Ethiopia) said that, at an earlier meeting, her delegation had revealed the extent of the atrocities inflicted on Ethiopians living in Eritrea by the Eritrean regime. All statements subsequently made by the Government of Eritrea had been designed to mislead the international community and to cover up its inhumanity. The Government of Ethiopia could not accept false allegations and lies.

51. **Mr. Tekle** (Eritrea), replying to the statement by the representative of Ethiopia, said that Mr. Dieter Oberndorfer, a professor of political science at the University of Freiburg, had remarked that Ethiopia had received more donor assistance during the 1990s than almost any other country in Africa, and that the political repression, human rights violations, lack of political pluralism and restrictions on freedom of opinion that were occurring there had scarcely been noticed by the donor community. According to him, international development cooperation was the lifeline of the regime, and served to aggravate the crisis by stabilizing a system that practised total control of society.

52. The *Ethiopian Review* had noted that Tigray political and economic domination was the policy of Prime Minister Meles, and that, under the guise of privatization, nationalized assets were being transferred to Tigreans and other supporters of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). It had then stated that never in the history of Ethiopia had so few confiscated so much wealth from so many in such a short period of time. Mr. Tilahun Yilma, a professor of medicine at the University of California, had observed that that was the first time since Mussolini's unsuccessful effort that a totally ethnic, predatory and repressive State had been imposed on Ethiopians.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.